

**Union Square CAC
Meeting Notes
January 27, 2014 at 6 P.M.
Somerville High School Library**

1. Introductions
2. Background
 - a. Edward O'Donnell, Director of Economic Development, OSPCD, provides brief overview regarding the redevelopment of Union Square, including rezoning, SomerVision, and the Revitalization Plan.
 - b. O'Donnell discusses RFQ for Master Developer, released December 5th. Responses to the RFQ are due January 31 by 12:30 P.M.
 - c. Parsons Brinkerhoff meeting scheduled for 1/29. Consultants will review plans for infrastructure improvements, roadway design.
 - d. CAC Chairman Wig Zamos compared size and scale of USQ Redevelopment to other local redevelopment projects in order to provide context, realistic timeline.
3. Purpose of CAC
 - a. Most immediately: review the responses to the RFQ.
 - b. Moving forward: two year process in which CAC will advise the Master Developer, act as a sounding board regarding community's concerns.
 - c. Process: The City wants to be as transparent as possible. O'Donnell explained the process used for the disposition and redevelopment of Powderhouse School. This process worked well; could serve as a model for CAC. In each meeting, there will be time provided for public comment and Q&A.
4. CAC members share their hopes for USQ redevelopment
 - Maintaining character
 - Preserving locally owned businesses
 - Ensuring the integrity of process
 - Balancing commercial and residential uses
 - Job creation; Somerville has fewer jobs per sq. mi. than any other MA city/town
 - Caution with any use of eminent domain
 - Growing innovation, fabrication spaces
 - Thoughtful plan for affordable housing, local jobs, growth of commercial tax base
 - Incubation space as well as space for mid-stage companies
 - Maintaining diversity of business, income, age and ethnicity
 - Walkability, bikeability
 - Successfully blending old buildings with new (e.g. Paris, Melbourne)
 - Inclusion of space for traditional artists; live/work spaces
 - Prioritization of wants vs. needs; recognition that sacrifices will need to be made
 - Reusing buildings when possible, especially historic spaces
 - Water and sewer infrastructure
5. Issue of Eminent Domain

- a. O'Donnell explains that such a large scale redevelopment project can lead to emotional conversations, especially if residents and businesses fear eminent domain. Explains that the City has no intentions of taking property by eminent domain. Cites Assembly Square as a model in which no property taken by eminent domain. City and CAC will encourage local businesses to stay in Union Square and participate in the process moving forward.

6. Next Meeting

- a. Scheduled for Monday, January 10th at 6 P.M. in the Public Safety Building
- b. Meeting will be substantive; members of OSPCD staff will present more formal background on "how we got here," including a detailed look at SomerVision, The Union Square Revitalization Plan, and the Green Line Extension.

7. Meeting adjourned at 7:35 P.M.